

thoughts and prayers. I hope all the people of Northwest Florida and our Nation do the same.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 16, 2007*

Mr. CRENSHAW. Madam Speaker, on Monday, May 14, 2007, I was unable to cast several votes because I was meeting with Forest Service and fire fighting personnel to assess the hazardous situation and current evacuation of several areas in the Fourth Congressional District threatened by wildfires.

Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall 342, the D.C. Tuition Assistance Grant Program Reauthorization; "yea" on rollcall 343, Supporting National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims; and "yea" on rollcall 344, Recognizing National AmeriCorps Week.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 16, 2007*

Mr. GALLEGLY. Madam Speaker, I was unable to make the following rollcall votes on May 14, 2007:

H.R. 1124, To extend the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Pass, I would have voted "nay."

H. Res. 223, Supporting the goals and ideals of a National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree, I would have voted "aye."

H. Res. 385, Recognizing National AmeriCorps Week, On Motion to Suspend the Rules and Agree, I would have voted "aye."

#### INTRODUCING THE NATIONAL AMUSEMENT PARK RIDE SAFETY ACT OF 2007

### HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 16, 2007*

Mr. MARKEY. Madam Speaker, Memorial Day is the beginning of the season when American families take their children to our amusement parks for a day of fun and sun. Unfortunately, it is also the case that over 75 percent of the serious injuries suffered on these rides occur between the months of May and September. Most of America thinks that the rides at these parks are subject to oversight by the Nation's top consumer safety watchdog—the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). But this is not true. The industry was subject to federal safety regulation, but in 1981 it succeeded in carving out a special-interest political exemption in the law—the so-called Roller Coaster Loophole.

It is time to put the safety of our children first—it is time to close the Roller Coaster

Loophole. Today I am introducing the National Amusement Park Ride Act to restore safety oversight to a largely unregulated industry. I am pleased to be joined in this effort by Representatives JAN SCHAKOWSKY (D-IL), CHARLIE RANGEL (D-NY), JIM MCGOVERN (D-MA), EL-EANOR HOLMES NORTON (D-DC), CAROLYN MALONEY (D-NY) and ANNA ESHOO (D-CA).

"Fixed" or "fixed-site" rides are found predominantly in destination theme parks. When an accident occurs on such rides, the law actually prevents the CPSC from even setting foot in the park to find out what happened. In some States, an investigation may occur, but in many, there is literally no regulatory oversight at all. And no matter how diligent a particular state might be, there is no substitute for Federal oversight of an industry where park visitors often come from out-of-state; a single manufacturer will sell versions of the same ride to park operators in many different States; and no state has the jurisdiction, resources or mission to ensure that the safety lessons learned within its borders are shared systematically with every other State.

Although the overall risk of death on an amusement park ride is very small, it is not zero. Sixty-four deaths have occurred on amusement park rides since 1987, and over two-thirds occur on "fixed-site" rides in our theme parks. In August 1999, 4 deaths occurred on roller coasters in just one week, "one of the most calamitous weeks in the history of America's amusement parks," according to U.S. News and World Report:

Every one of these is an unspeakable horror for the families, and every one of them deserves to be investigated by a Federal safety expert with the knowledge and the power to ensure that what happened at the accident site does not get repeated in other states.

It is simply inexcusable that when a loved one dies or is seriously injured on these rides, there is no system in place to ensure that the ride is investigated, the causes determined, and the flaws fixed, not just on that ride, but on every similar ride in every other State. The reason this system does not exist is the Roller Coaster Loophole.

The industry attempts to justify its special-interest exemption by pretending that there is no risk in riding machines that carry human beings 70, 80 or 90 miles an hour. The rides are very short, and most people are not injured. But in fact, the number of fatalities per passenger mile on roller coasters is higher than on passenger trains, passenger buses, and passenger planes. The National Safety Council uses a standard method of comparing risk of injury per distance traveled. Riding on a roller coaster is generally safer than driving a car, but is not generally safer than riding a passenger bus, train or airplane:

Fatalities are just the tip of problem, however. Broken bones, gashes, and other serious injuries have been rising much faster than attendance. The CPSC is prohibited from requiring the submission of injury data directly from ride operators, so it is forced to fall back on an indirect method, the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), which gathers information from a statistical sample of hospital emergency rooms and then estimates national numbers. Nevertheless, NEISS has been gathering these statistics systematically over many years, so that trends become clear over time.

Beginning in 1996, a sharp upward trend can be seen in hospital emergency room visits

by passengers on unregulated "fixed" rides—the category of rides exempt from CPSC regulation under the Roller Coaster Loophole. These injuries soared 96 percent over the next 5 years. Meanwhile, such emergency room visits were falling for passengers on rides that the CPSC still regulates.

The theme park industry likes to tell the public that its rides are safer than the mobile rides because they are overseen by a permanent park staff, but according to this independent government safety agency report, the mobile parks have less of an injury problem than the theme parks.

For the most part, these rides are designed, operated and ridden safely. But clearly, the margin for error is much narrower for a child on a ride traveling at 100 mph than on a ride traveling 50 mph. Children often do foolish things, and the operators themselves are often teenagers. People make mistakes. The design of these rides must anticipate that their patrons will act like children, because they often are children.

The bill we are introducing today will close the loophole that prevents effective Federal safety oversight of amusement park rides. It would, therefore, restore to the CPSC the standard safety jurisdiction over "fixed-site" amusement park rides that it used to have before the Roller Coaster Loophole was adopted. There would no longer be an artificial and unjustifiable split between unregulated "fixed-site" rides and regulated "mobile" rides. When a family traveled to a park anywhere in the United States, a mother or father would know that their children were being placed on a ride that was subject to basic safety regulation by the CPSC.

It would restore CPSC's authority to investigate accidents; develop and enforce action plans to correct defects, and act as a national clearinghouse for accident and defect data.

The bill would also authorize appropriations of \$500,000 annually to enable the CPSC to carry out the purposes of the Act.

The bill I am introducing today is supported by the Nation's leading consumer-protection advocates, including Saferparks.org, the Consumer Federation of America, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group, the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, and Kids in Danger.

I urge my colleagues to join us in this effort to make this the safest summer ever in our theme parks. Let's pass the National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act.

#### CONGRATULATING THE DAYTON NAACP YOUTH COUNCIL

### HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 16, 2007*

Mr. TURNER. Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize and congratulate the members of the Dayton, OH branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP, for its positive accomplishments on behalf of our young people.

On Saturday, April 14, 2007, the Dayton NAACP Youth Council, under the guidance of Youth Advisor Barbara Mack, hosted its first annual Youth Leadership Summit 100 at Sinclair Community College. The NAACP Youth Council is an organization involving some